BRITISH COLUMBIA
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Education Report

Back to School Tips

Elementary School Students

- Find a safe route to and from school and practice the route with your children.
- Let your children see you read, and set aside time each day for family reading.
- Insist on breakfast. It helps maintain a healthy weight and provides necessary fuel for the brain to learn.

Intermediate/Middle School Students

- Talk to your children about appropriate behaviour at school and what to do if they encounter an instance of bullying behaviour.
- Set up a homework area away from the TV, with adequate stationery supplies and lighting.
- Continue to encourage healthy eating habits. Teenagers have different nutritional needs, so be sure to consult the Canada Food Guide.

Secondary Students

- Encourage your teenagers to review their schedule and make an appointment with the counsellor if there are any problems.
- Encourage your teenagers to talk to you about issues that are important to them, including peer pressure, alcohol, drugs and healthy sexual decision-making.
- Continue with the established homework routine. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.

B.C. classrooms see a flurry of activity every fall as students and teachers head back to school – this year on Tuesday, Sept. 5. For information on how you can help your child get ready for the first day at school, see the Ministry of Education's back-to-school tips. The tips are available in English, French, Punjabi and Chinese. ***Read tips***

HOT TOPIC - *B.C.'s Education by the Numbers*

Enrolment estimates indicate that there will be fewer students attending B.C. schools this year:

- 560,741 public school students – 7,082 fewer than last year.
- 57,413 English-as-a-second-language students – 172 fewer than last year.
- 50,083 Aboriginal students – 248 fewer than last year.
- 20,274 students with Level 1, 2 and 3 special needs – 148 fewer than last year.
- 9,589 adult students – 133 fewer than last year.

Last year there were:

- 2,017 schools in B.C. – 1,662 public and 355 independent.
- 1,177 additional teachers hired at B.C. public schools.

Funding for schools is increasing for 2006-07:

- $5.196 billion education budget – a 12.95 per cent increase from 2000-01.
- $7,207 in estimated per student funding – the highest ever, a $114 increase from 2005-06.
- $488-million increase to B.C. public schools since 2000-01: $335 million in operating grants and $153 million in one-time grants.

B.C. Students Shine at Skills Competition

The Province, as part of its continuing efforts to support students interested in the trades and technology, recently honoured B.C. students for their success at the latest Skills Canada Competition. B.C. students brought home 21 medals for technological feats including 3-D character animation, aircraft maintenance, website design and TV/video production. Read more

At Right: *Minister Bond operates a robot with Dylan Hutchinson (left), and Owen Kemmen, bronze medal winners from G.P. Vanier secondary school in the Comox Valley school district.*

Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

September is an exciting time. It's a time of eager anticipation about all of the wonderful things B.C. students will accomplish this year. More than 560,000 B.C. public school students are going back to school, and we will be working with parents, teachers, staff and trustees to help every student achieve their full potential.

We want British Columbia to be the best educated, most literate jurisdiction in North America, and our focus on reading for this school year will help students succeed in school and in life. I know we all share the belief that education is a lifelong learning process, and that it is vital to B.C.'s future – because today's students are tomorrow's leaders. We want students to be excited about learning so they can succeed inside and outside the classroom, and so they are ready for their life after high school – whether they enter the workforce, attend university or take trades training.

As families and staff prepare for the new school year, I wish you all the best for another happy, healthy and successful year ahead.

Reading Corner

Jake and Peter are adventurous junior guides on a kayak tour off the coast of Vancouver Island. Comprised mainly of action sequences, Surf Zone will appeal to sports and adventure fans. The teens learn about self-reliance as they negotiate several narrow escapes involving a giant octopus, thieves and a deadly storm. Facts about wilderness survival and local wildlife appear frequently throughout the story. This book is suitable for students in grades 6–9.

SURF ZONE
Written by Pam Withers